NEWS AND GOSSIP OF MOTION PICTURE THEATERS AND STUDIOS

The New Movies

By

ROBERT E. SHERWOOD.

"HOPE for the best" has always seemed to us a particularly useless slogan—in the same category, in fact, with "Don't worry."

Not that it is any crime to hope. Every one is entitled to a few expectations now and then. But the person who hopes for the best commits himself to a policy which allows of no compromise. He admits in advance that he will not be satisfied with anything less, which means that nine times out of ten he will not be satisfied with anything at all.

There is something tremendously final in the word "best," as in all superlatives. It allows no room for possible qualification.

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Although it is against our principles, we continually find ourself hoping for the best when we enter movie theaters. We convince ourself that we are about to view a film which is worthy of its advertisements; we kid ourselves into believing that it is to be "A Masterpiece of the Cinematographic Art" or "A Soul Stirring Epic of the Silver Screen."

That, undoubtedly, is why we are disappointed so frequently. If we assured ourself in advance that "this is going to be a punk picture," or "Here's another good evening wasted," we might be pleasantly surprised when the offering turns out to be moderately entertaining.

Hope is all right while it lasts. But it certainly is a poor loser.

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In the case of "Robin Hood" we permitted our expectations to run wild. No picture has ever inspired such a glow of optimism in us. It was therefore highly satisfactory to record that Messrs. Fairbanks, Dwan & Co. justified our faith.

We watched "Robin Hood" in the early stages of its production, on the Fairbanks premises in Hollywood, and we gained a faint conception of the vast labor which had to be expended on this film before it could be ready for the eyes of the public.

When Douglas Fairbanks started work on "The Three Musketeers" he resolved to devote himself to the production of big pictures. He would make one a year, and each one would represent the best that he could possibly offer.

This meant, of course, a tremendous outlay of money, and a proportionately great risk. It is a well known fact that the biggest movies are usually the biggest flops. (Mr. Griffith can testify to this.) If Mr. Fairbanks had wanted to play safe, he could have made ten pictures for the cost of "The Three Musketeers" and Robin Hood," and possibly ten times as much money.

He could easily have turned out program pictures on schedule time, with a safe and sane margin of profit on each one. But he wanted to make a big splash—or none at all. He wanted to produce photoplays that would live. He wanted to set up standards which would be a little higher than any that had been set up before.

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So he gave his best to "Rooin Hood." He went into the thing body and soul. He assembled the best talent available to cooperate with him in every department, and he did not permit personal vanity to hamper his collaborators in their work.

The results are on view at the Lyric Theater, where alll may see them.

It is up to the public to draw its own conclusions as to the success or failure of Mr. Fairbanks's efforts.

But credit must be given for the efforts themselves. Douglas Fairbanks tried hard, which is more than can be said for many of his less ambitious fellows in the film business. He worked intelligently and conscientiously over every detail of "Robin Hood," and made a heroic attempt to do the thing right.

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Our observation of the movie stars in Hollywood convinced us that they are the most listless set of workers in the world. They never seem to care whether school keeps or not. They go through their daily toil in a mechanical manner and take little pride in the efforts that they attain.

Douglas Fairbanks is, therefore, a particularly notable exception. And we can name another—Harold Lloyd. While palms are being passed out gratis, this earnest young man should not be overlooked.

Mr. Lloyd slaves over his comedies with all the ardor of a religious fanatic carving the Lord's Prayer on the head of a pin. He prunes them, he revises them, he polishes them, until he is satisfied that they are as good as it is possible for him to make them.

The fruits of honest toil are large and luscious in Harold Lloyd's case. His last two pictures, "A Sailor Made Man" and "Grandma's Boy," are probably the two most successful films that have ever been released by one company. Their popularity has been phenomenal—although readily understandable when one knows Mr. Lloyd and appreciates the sincerity of his intent.

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Speaking, as we were not so long ago, of "Robin Hood," there is one flaw in its presentation at the Lyric which is particularly noticeable to those who occupy central seats in the first few rows. They see a great deal more of the orchestra leader than of Mr. Fairbanks's shadow on the screen.

That is all very well to a certain extent. Orchestra leaders are talented fellows and their antics are fascinating to behold. But only fo a little while. After about fifteen minutes of gesticulations their act grows monotonous.

It may be necessary, in view of the size of the orchestra at the Lyric, for the conductor to perch himself upon a lofty platform. But, after all, the audience pays to see the picture, not the trained contortionist who regulates the behavior of the oboes, bassoons and clarinets.

The management at the Lyric should either keep the first eight rows vacant or they should limit themselves to a less obtrusive pipe organ.

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Nazimova's "Salome," the wandering orphan of the film industry, has at last found a home. The United Artists Corporation has opened its doors to this stray waif and will doubtless present it for critical inspection at an early date.

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Buster Keaton, who is now resting at the ancestral manse of the Talmadge clan, will start soon upon a five reel comedy. His only previous attempt at a picture of this length was "The Saphead," in which he co-starred with William H. Crane.

It didn't turn out very well, but that was hardly Buster's fault.

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Eddie Cline, Buster Keaton's "gag man," is to direct Jackie Coogan in his new picture, "Toby Tyler," a circus story. Mr. Cline has played no mean part in the production of Keaton's comedies. He has collaborated with Buster on the writing and the direction and has even attempted a few unobtrusive characterizations before the camera.

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"Tess of the Storm Country" will come soon to the Strand, and Mary Pickford will then be able to crawl back into the limelight which has been so completely usurped of late by her husband, Mr. Fairbanks. "Tess" was directed by John S. Robertson, and from where we sit it looks good.

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Charles Ray's next picture bears the highly dramatic title, "The Girl I Loved." It is a dramatization of a James Whitcombe Riley poem.

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Charlie Chaplin's new one, "The Pilgrim," will be along soon—which is no cause for complaint.

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When "The Pilgrim" has been safely launched upon its progress, Chaplin will embark upon a comedy which will be at least eight reels long. Figuring the rate at which he works on an ordinary two reeler, we can hardly expect to see his next production before 1931.

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Pauline Garon, the blond little girl who appeared with Owen Moore in "Reported Missing" and with Richard Barthelmess in "Sonny," is now in Hollywood, having enlisted in the forces of Cecil B. De Mille.

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Richard Ordynski, formerly stage director of the Metropolitan Opera House, has also joined the gold rush to California. He is aiding George Fitzmaurice in the production of Pola Negri's first American film, "Bella Donna."

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Lois Weber is going to work for Universal. Her first picture will be "Jewel," which by the way is a revival.

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A luncheon is to be given tomorrow at the Ritz-Carlton for the critics—to meet John M. Stahl.

This mad whirl of society is killing us.

To Be Seen in Current Offerings on the Screen

Photoplays of the Week

APOLLO—"One Exciting Night," directed by D. W. Griffith, with Carol Dempster and Henry Hull.
ASTOR—"The Town That Forgot God," directed by Harry Millarde.
CAMEO—"The Queen of the Moulin Rouge," with Martha Mansfield.
CAPITOL—"To Have and to Hold," directed by George Fitzmaurice, with Betty Compson and Bert Lytell.
CRITERION—"When Knighthood Was in Flower," directed by Robert G. Vignola, with Marion Davies.
FORTY-FOURTH STREET—"The Village Blacksmith," Fox picture.
LYRIC—Douglas Fairbanks in "Robin Hood," directed by Allan Dwan.
RIALTO—"The Man Who Saw Tomorrow," with Thomas Meighan.
RIVOLI—"The Young Rajah," with Rodolph Valentino.
STRAND—"Oliver Twist," directed by Frank Lloyd, with Jackie Coogan.

Music Programs at The Picture Theaters

This week the program at the Capitol opens with the "Impressions of Faust" by Gounod. In these S. L. Rothafel has included an introduction by the orchestra, Erno Rapee conducting; the duet in Faust's study by J. H. Masor and Justin Lawrie; the "Vision" and "Spinning Song" by Evelyn Herbert, the duet "O Tender Moon" by Evelyn Herbert and Justin Lawrie the "Kermesse" by the orchestra; "The Calf of Gold" by J. H. Mason; the waltz ballet interpolated by Mlle. Gambarelli, Alexander Oumansky, Doris Niles, Tralia Zanou and Capitol ballet corps. As a special prelude to the elaborate feature there will be an American Indian war dance by the principal dancers.

The Rivoli music program prepared by Hugo Riesenfeld will have an atmospheric stage prologue in which Miriam Lax, soprano; Adrian DeSilva, tenor, and the Rivoli ensemble will sing Rimsky-Korsakoff's "Song of India." The orchestral selection will be the overture from Gomez's "Il Guarany," played by the orchestra under the direction of Frederick Stahlberg and Emanuel Baer.

The Rialto music program will open with Nicolai's "The Merry Wives of Windsor" overture, played by the orchestra under the direction of Mr. Riesenfeld and Joseph Littau. A special orchestration of a fox trot will be the classical jazz selection. The Ampico reproducing piano will be the soloist with the orchestra, playing the first movement of Saint-Saens's "Concerto, Opus 22," from a recording made by Mischa Levitski, Russian pianist. Rose and Frances Bernardi will make their debut at the Rialto with a "Dance Intermezzo."

Fokine's dance presentations of "Russian Toys," from Rimsky-Korsakoff's "Fantasie Concert," and Strauss's "Waltz" are held at the Strand a second week by Joseph Plunkett to accompany "Oliver Twist."

THE SUBWAY CIRCUIT.

TELLER'S SHUBERT THEATER, BROOKLYN—Julia Sanderson in "Tangerine."

MAJESTIC THEATER—Frances White and Taylor Holmes in "The Hotel Mouse."

MONTAUK THEATER—Richard Bennett in "He Who Gets Slapped."

SHUBERT-RIVERIA THEATER, MANHATTAN—"The Rose of Stamboul," with Tessa Kosta, James Barton and Marion Green.

Two Plays Tried Out on Stages in Other Cities

Reviewers Pass Judgment on Pieces Soon to Appear Here.

TWO plays scheduled for a speedy hearing in New York have recently been the subject of some pen-wielding in out of town cities. "Up She Goes," which on Monday next will be the first musical comedy ever cast loose at the Playhouse, brought forth, at its tryout, enthusiasm from the reviewer in the New Haven *Evening News*, to wit:

"Up Seh Goes," the new musical comedy chaperoned by the William A. Brady interests, soared to heights of genuine popularity at the Shubert Theater last night. New Haven is being given an opportunity to inspect this bouncing musical youngster before New York baptizes it with critical eyes and Shubert patrons last night seemed to enjoy the treat.

Harry Tierney, gifted young gentleman who turned out the delightful score of "Irene," has again composed another series of rollicking jingles. While Mr. Tierney has not clothed "Up She Goes" in another "Alice Blue Gown,", he has dressed it all up in tunes well suited to the sprightly dancing numbers interwoven with the soft melodious duos of Donald Brian and Gloria Foy.

Frank Craven and Bert French have worked out some effective dance ensembles, the very attractive chorus whirling and spinning through novel steps with ginger enough to remind one of a Cohan show. Encore was the watchword last night, and the company was generous in responding. The costuming, while not elaborate, is in excellent taste with the atmosphere of the performance, and blends insensibly with the exquisite settings. The country club scene in the second act and completed bungalow in the final act are gems of stagecraft.

Donald Brian, Gloria Foy, Richard Gallagher and Helen Bolton are the outstanding principals, and all right smart entertainers. Brian, like good wine, improves with age, and while he comes to us stripped of his usual military costume and glamor, he makes a very ardent lover and pleasing songster. And then Mr. Brian always could dance.

Miss Foy, who understudied Marilynn Miller in "Sally," makes an ideal partner for Mr. Brian. She dances superbly with him, sings sweetly and makes love sincerely. Miss Bolton, always a captivating queen of musical comedy, has many breezy things to say, and comes into her own in the last act with Mr. Gallagher in "Settle Down," a corking dancing number. Miss Bolton is even more of a delight in the present vehicle than in "My Golden Girl," which showed her to advantage here a couple of seasons ago.

"Mary Get Your Hair Cut" got one Boston reviewer stirred up in this vein:

"Mary Get Your Hair Cut," with Carroll McComas in the cast, is exactly what that combination of words sounds like—froth beaten up with much skill. If Cosmo Hamilton should lose his moral purpose and collaborate with F. Scott Fitzgerald, minus his sense of direction, they quite likely would do a farce comedy something after the manner achieved by Max Marcin unaided. "Mary Get Your Hair Cut" starts out as a plausible justification of the flapper, switches to the side of the wife neglected because she is not a flapper and veers once more to a victory for the wife, not on her own merits, but because she has been a pseudo-flapper. Heaven forbid that the author of a piece which he willingly calls a farce comedy should be held to strict accountability. No audience should require such a person to be consistent, but his parade should pass a given point. Mary and her haircut does not, and one shudders to think what the household of the Carters must be like in the fourth and succeeding acts. Only three are shown on the stage. At the end of the third Mary has won because she flapped with great agility, although she had no gift for it. By "teaching husband a lesson" she has cured him forevermore, perhaps, of desiring to see her flap and she has no taste for it. Yet, such is the manner of her teaching that lesson, she must go on in all those succeeding acts, that the audience does not see, living up to the murk of her past of a week. The audience knows she was at the Martha Washington, but husband does not.

Furthermore, an audience perfectly willing to see Miss McComas bob her hair and step out, because Miss McComas acts Mary ever so much better than Mary deserves, must notice that her change of method had no effect; it was the week at the Martha Washington that did it and she could have had that experience without the other experiment. Then there would have been no play it is true and audiences could not see Miss McComas play Mary, which latter fact is the more important. The story is much too slight for the three acts given it and so an entire scene is given over to extraneous conversation between exaggerated types who are types only for the purpose of the piece. This scene is tiresome.